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# BETTER PLANTS



God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden

VOLUME I

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Known from coast to coast, and even in foreign countries, the fame of the Lilacs in Highland Park, Rochester, New York, grows each year. More than 500 varieties are in the collection. During the blooming season thousands of visitors throng the Park daily, fascinated by the varied colors and forms of these lovely flowers.

## Lilacs—"The Flowers that Washington Loved"

Lilacs make a sentimental appeal to all Americans familiar with the old-time gardens of town and country. Lilac-time is spring-time at its best; when the air is filled with far-flung fragrance, what more delicate token can one bring to a friend or sweetheart than "just a bunch of lilacs"?

What more cheerful sight in May than a venerable old lilac tree, weighted with bloom, by the farm-yard gate; for the big old specimens do become veritable trees and it seems the older they grow the more profuse the bloom, and herein is one of its chief merits, for once established a lilac is a joy for a lifetime.

I do not know if the lilacs I saw at Mt. Vernon are the ones originally planted by Washington, but I can well believe so, for where my grandmother used to live are wonderful old lilacs that were planted long before the gold rush to the New Eldorado in 1849. Now, after threescore and ten years, they bloom in old-time splendor.

### Syringa—Philadelphus

*Syringa* is the botanical name for the lilac. Out West we used to call the mock oranges "syringas." The common purple or white lilac of an old garden is *Syringa vulgaris*, a native of southeastern Europe, Hungary, and the Balkan countries. The syringas comprise a dozen or more distinct species, most of which, except *Syringa vulgaris*, are natives of northern and central Asia.

### French Lilacs

Most of the many beautiful hybrid forms now found in large collections were obtained by Lemoine, from crosses of the common lilac with a rather early flowered Asiatic species, *Syringa oblata*. One who has not seen them would hardly believe the wonderful results of these crosses. The trusses have been greatly enlarged; many of them have full, double flowers of great size. The range of colors has been

greatly extended, varying from white and creamy white to soft shades of pink and rose, soft blues, violets and heliotropes, deep purple-crimson, and dark purple-garnet. Can you imagine a richer group of colors, or a combination more entrancing in its harmony?

### Season of Bloom

Lilacs generally begin to bloom about the middle of May, with about a week's variation in the blooming period of the different varieties. To these Lemoine has added a new race of hybrids, crosses of the common lilac with the Asiatic species *Giraldii*, a very early blooming variety which has transferred its early blooming qualities to its hybrids which come into bloom a week earlier than the other varieties. They are all single and in shades of violet, and are very rapid, strong growers and extremely profuse bloomers. This past season they bloomed unusually early, being at their best the last of April.



### Blooming Age

The old-fashioned or common lilac attains considerable age before blooming, resembling wistaria in this respect. Continuous trimming, thinning out, cultivation, and removal of suckers is conducive to bloom which can be expected at the age of six to seven years.

The French hybrid lilacs bloom not only at a much earlier age and season, but more freely. It is nothing unusual for our one-year-old cuttings to throw bloom-buds, and quite common to find beautiful trusses on two-year-old plants.

### Planting Size

Unfortunately, plants of this desirable strain have never been plentiful in this country, and since the quarantine on foreign importations, the demand exceeds the supply. Therefore, in the handling of French hybrid lilacs, size is no basis for price. The price is set according to the quality of bloom. I make no apologies for

the fact that few of our salable French hybrid lilacs exceed 2 feet in height. I would import thousands of the same size from France if permitted and would be glad to have them. You, too, can be glad to own a French hybrid lilac for the beauty and distinction it will give to your grounds during lilac-time.

### Lilac Planting

Lilacs are best planted in fall, after the leaves begin to drop. Planting can be continued until the ground freezes permanently and bloom can be expected the next spring. Spring planting of lilacs is also satisfactory, but the planting season is shorter, since it extends only from the time the ground opens until the buds appear. Spring-planted lilacs will seldom bloom before the next year.

The planting process consists of little more than the excavation of a hole 2 to 3 feet in diameter, to the depth indicated by the ground markings of the nursery



## A Wonderful Group of FRENCH LILACS on Farr's Bargain Table

**B**ECAUSE the supply of French Hybrid Lilacs is limited, I cannot offer a list of named varieties. However, if the selection is left to me you will receive plants at a bargain never equaled in the brief history of French Lilacs. You will also receive the benefit of my selection from over 200 varieties.

### Bargain Lilac Collection

**For \$5 cash** I will furnish three French Lilacs in 3 varieties, my selection.

**For \$10 cash** I will furnish six French Lilacs in 6 varieties, my selection.

**For \$20 cash** I will furnish twelve French Lilacs in 12 varieties, my selection.

Odd quantities, my selection, at an equal rate of \$1.67 per plant. The average price of Lilacs listed in my catalogue is over \$2.50.

Do not be surprised if you receive \$8 worth of Lilacs for \$5, or \$15 worth for \$10.

*Please do not ask me to include certain varieties unless you are willing to pay full catalogue price.*

**Guarantee:** (1) When you receive your plants check the prices in my catalogue. If the total price of the plants does not exceed the collection price by 10 per cent you can keep the plants and I will refund your money.

(2) If you are not pleased when the plants bloom in 1925 (for they need some time after transplanting), write me and tell me why; you can keep the plants and I will refund your money. I would not make this offer unless I were sure of my plants—would I?

These bargains are planned and offered on the "cash with order" basis. 100 collections have been reserved. Offer expires November. Please send cash with your order.

## BERTRAND H. FARR—

Wyomissing Nurseries Co.

1250 Garfield Avenue, Wyomissing, Penna.

planting. Pack and spread the first application of ground firmly about the roots with the hands and fill in the hole with a shovel. Then again tamp the ground firmly, so winter winds will not loosen the stem and allow a killing girdling of ice to form around the stem below the surface. Mound to a 3-inch height for drainage, and allow for settling of soil. Do not mix fertilizer with the soil. Fertilize by top dressing with bone-meal and a fall mulch of straw- or leaf-manure after the ground freezes. In spring work the mulch into the top soil.

### Cultivation

Maintain a circle 3 feet in diameter, loosened and free of weeds, around the plant at all times.

### Lilac Enemies

The lilacs have comparatively few enemies but be on the lookout for scales, caterpillars, and borers. The best thing to do when suspicious of trouble is to send us an affected twig with a letter. We will furnish the remedy by return mail.

### Lilac Pointers

Lilacs are propagated by two main methods:

- (a) Budding or grafting on privet stock.
- (b) Raising plants from cuttings placed in wet sand.

The first method is easier, cheaper, and faster, but less satisfactory and more costly to the buyer in the end. Budded lilacs will throw privet suckers from the privet roots and unless diligently removed the suckers will overcome the lilac. One spring a friend called me to see her wonderfully prolific lilac plant. She was quite proud of it until I discovered that this wonderful grower was one of the nicest privet plants I had ever seen.

For many years we have propagated all of our lilacs from cuttings, and, while the lower percentage of success and other factors makes the process more costly than budding, I am rewarded by the possession of America's foremost commercial collection of lilacs—and *all on their own roots*.

November is the planting month. If you decide to have a lilac-time of your own, you cannot order too soon. Late orders seldom are filled completely because of lack of supply.



## Here's a Page for Everybody

"Better Plants" is our broadcast letter to our friends. We are glad to receive contributions and inquiries and to publish such as will be interesting and instructive to our readers.

We would like to receive: (a) suggestions for the improvement of "Better Plants" without increasing the cost; (b) contributory articles on any unique garden experience.

*Steilacoom, Wash., December 4, 1922*

Thank you for packing the shrubs so well. They came through in fine shape and were splendid sturdy little lilacs. Hope to have another order for lilacs next year since I have found out how well you can parcel post them.

A neighbor of mine was explaining to me about a white lilac that she had for two years; imagine her astonishment this spring when it bloomed and was purple. I explained the trouble and told her to send to Farr next time and get lilacs on their own roots.

JESSIE C. BARLOW

*Eugene, Ore., June 13, 1923*

We have been so pleased with the bulbs received from your nursery; in fact with everything we received. I have given you several orders for peonies and many other plants, mostly perennials, and every one has lived and been a source of great pleasure to us and to our many friends.

We will, a little later on, send you an order consisting of peonies, lilies, iris, lilacs, and bulbs. Everything we have ordered from you has lived; we have not lost one single thing after coming all that distance. I thought surely I was going to lose Lilac Marc Micheli which I ordered from you last fall, but this spring it came out just fine, and while not yet in bloom, we know it will live and give us the same joy that everything we have received from you has done.

You may use this or any part of it as a recommendation, and I am glad to give it. I cannot speak too highly of every plant or bulb bought from you.

MRS. O. S. CALLISON

### CUSTOMER'S LETTER

*Petersburg, Ohio, May 30, 1923*

I have one tree peony now in bloom which has seventy-two flowers, immense in size. I have wanted to get more stock and heard you have them. Will you please let me know if you have them, and prices, for which I thank you in advance.

DR. J. M. FLOOR

### OUR REPLY

*Wyomissing, Pa., June 1, 1923*

Dr. J. M. Floor

Dear Sir: Because of our limited supply, reference to tree peonies was omitted from the first edition of "Better Plants—By Farr."

Since 1918 the rate of demand has been greater than the rate of propagation. Foreign importation has been governed by Federal permit, and our once unrivaled collection has dwindled to specimen plants of the better colors and varieties. Our remaining supply is little more than a good nucleus from which to propagate.

On January 8, 1923, under special permit of the Federal Horticultural Board, we received 2,500 large and choice tree peonies from Japan. These plants may not be sold by us for two years and are periodically inspected by Federal agents. We are, however, allowed to propagate from them and may sell the propagated plants.

We will also propagate from the nucleus remaining from the original collection, and will be able to accept a limited number of orders for fall 1923 shipment. Such orders will be considered as reservations and will be accepted and filled in the order received so long as the supply lasts.

It is impracticable and almost impossible to import named and true-to-color varieties of Japanese tree peonies. The best we can do is to sell the plants with prices according to size and age.

By the laborious use and classification of color charts and Japanese prints it is always possible to name a few imported varieties more or less accurately. When such plants are desired the prices are necessarily higher. Frankly, we consider all tree peonies to be of such rare beauty that a name can add little to the value. There are no poor tree peonies, and we have yet to hear the first opinion to the contrary.

Japanese tree peony prices for fall, 1923: one-year-old plants, our selection, \$2.50 each; two-year-old plants, our selection, \$5 each.

European tree peony prices for fall, 1923: one-year-old plants, our selection, \$2.50 each; two-year-old plants, our selection, \$5 each. Six plants for the price of five; twelve plants for the price of ten.

### CUSTOMER'S LETTER

*Oak Park, Ills., April 27, 1923*

Please be so kind as to give me information regarding the pruning of *Hydrangea arborescens*. Should this variety be cut to ground in spring. Our plants, established for three years, have never bloomed.

MRS. H. L. ADAMS

### OUR REPLY

*Wyomissing, Pa., May 1, 1923*

Mrs. Harry L. Adams

Dear Mrs. Adams: *Hydrangea arborescens* should be cut back rather severely, as the flowers are borne in the new canes of each year's growth. Pruning should be done while the plant is dormant, i.e. during the winter, and we would advise you to prune to within a foot of the ground.

If you secure no results from this method, transplant them to a different location. A change of soil usually helps.

### CUSTOMER'S LETTER

*Merchantville, N. J., May 21, 1923*

I think it was about seven years ago that I sent an order to you for 7 French lilacs. Of the 7 that came, all but one bloomed that year and every succeeding year; the seventh one bloomed this year for the first time, and was most satisfactory and beautiful.

I am writing to inquire about the treatment of the bushes; now that they have grown so large, they obstruct the view

from the dining-room windows. I have never seen such large, wonderful blooms, deliciously scented, as ours, the single blossoms measuring  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch across on one bush. We will soon have to lean out of the second-story windows to cut the blooms if they continue to grow as they have done. I can find no one who knows about lilacs, so am appealing to you, as there seems to be no instructions in the books.

MRS. A. E. CLARK

### OUR REPLY

*Wyomissing, Pa., May 24, 1923*

Mrs. A. E. Clark

Dear Madam: We were glad to hear that you were pleased with the lilacs that you purchased from us some time ago. We note from your letter that these plants are getting too large, and that you wish to know how to reduce their size.

Unfortunately, plants like human beings have their life cycle and must grow up. Your plants could have been kept lower if they had been systematically trimmed every spring just as soon as the bushes were finished flowering. We would suggest that you give your bushes a severe trimming directly after they are finished blooming, but you must realize that if this is done you will undoubtedly suffer next spring by not having many blooms.

### A DARK HORSE

Because of its color and its modest price "A Dark Horse" is perhaps the most appropriate term I can apply to Seminole, one of my 1920 iris introductions.

**Seminole.** S. soft violet rose; F. rich velvet crimson; brilliant orange beard. Given honorable mention by American Iris Society, June, 1920.

\$2.50 each, \$20 for 10  
5 or more at 10 rate

Seminole is a dome-shaped and very distinct iris of the Archeveque class, which makes it one of the richest colored of irises. It is of medium height, a very free bloomer and very effective for mass planting. It is worth \$2.50 to any garden.

### COLLECTIONS—MY SELECTION

So many of our friends overlook the limitations applied to "collections—my selection," that I consider it necessary to make the following explanation.

The low cost of plants included in collections is made possible by the same element which has so remarkably reduced the cost of automobiles—that is, quantity production.

Our collections consist of selected, standard and proved varieties which are propagated, advertised, sold, packed and shipped in quantity. This quantity handling allows for system, routine, and economy. The buyer is given the benefit of this economy.

For us to accept an order for a collection of the customer's selection or to allow substituted varieties in a named collection, at collection prices, would be like selling a specially built car at a standard built price. It cannot be done.

I trust that this explanation will smooth out and prevent many difficulties and misunderstandings.





HEZA WYZWON

thinks that autumn is the best time to set small trees and shrubs.

### GARDEN ACTIVITIES FOR SEPTEMBER

*"A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air,  
Sparkle the delicate deus, the distant snows,  
The great deep thrills, for through it every-  
where  
The breath of beauty blows."*

Now is the time to give a thought to next year's garden. September calls us to our duties.

If you have not already pruned the trees (Nature's Stately Children) do so now before the leaves fall, for it is much easier now to determine what part of the growth is to be removed than when the leaves have fallen and there is nothing but a lot of sticks. Cut the branches close and leave no wounds unpainted.

An orchard that is now growing satisfactorily can be improved wonderfully by sowing a cover crop. Don't let the orchard lie bare all winter, but sow rye—about two bushels to the acre. Cover crops are beneficial, not only to the ground when turned under in spring, but they keep the weeds down, prevent erosion, and make the garden clean and attractive looking during the fall and winter.

Attention should be given to evergreens that are being transplanted or have been transplanted recently. Keep them well watered because they are making a large root-growth to tide them over the winter.

This is the Peony, Iris, and Phlox month. If you want good results next year, start now to overhaul the plants by planting the roots as soon as they can be secured and by digging up the large clumps and dividing them. Good varieties are now available at a nominal cost; there is no excuse for purchasing poor things just because they are cheap.

The flower-garden should have its final clean-up. Remove the insect larvæ by cleaning out the old growth and weeds and burning them. Clip the hedges for the last time. Late growth from late clipping makes the whole plant tender and more susceptible to a cold winter.

Most weed-growth is practically over and this is one of the best periods of the year for seeding new lawns. If the work is done early, there is every assurance of success, for the grass will develop sufficient root-growth to carry it through the winter. The lawns should be top-dressed with some good fertilizer and thoroughly raked with an iron rake. The surface must be

loose in order that the roots of the young grass seed may penetrate.

Start transplanting the deciduous plants just as soon as the foliage turns yellow; in fact, the earlier in fall this work is done the better, for the roots will take hold before cold weather.

Feed freely with liquid manures the chrysanthemums and other similar plants that are in bud. However, this practice must be discontinued just as soon as the buds show color and signs of opening.

Prepare plans for any changes in existing groups before the leaves begin to fall, in order that you can tell just where the mistakes in the scheme exist.

Water the plants freely, especially the evergreens. A great deal of our so-called winter losses are due to the plants being allowed to become bone-dry when they are developing a root system.

Don't stop cutting the grass until all the growth has ceased. Wire grass, rye grass, and other heavy-growing grasses grow very rapidly at this season. Get rid of them. If allowed to overrun your garden they will be a serious factor to contend with in spring.

Collect fallen leaves, for when they have rotted they make the finest fertilizer. Prepare a nook where they can be stored without being scattered all over the place.

All the trees and shrubs are benefited by mulching. While it is too soon to apply any now, yet it is time to get the manure and other material on hand. Especially mulch the plants set out at any time during the year.

Give attention now to the bulb-planting for this season. Set the narcissi 6 inches deep for the finest results. The trumpet narcissi belong in a moist, well-drained loam. Scatter the daffodils in informal drifts and clusters about the lawn. Orders should be placed immediately, as early planting means better results.

### DUSTING PREFERABLE TO SPRAYING

In a series of years of tests, and particularly true with the recent improvements in dust materials, the dusts have been found superior to the liquid sprays in vegetable insect control.

The dusts are easier to apply; the necessary equipment for treating any given area is much less expensive; one may obtain a more complete covering of the treated plants; the material adheres better to the sleek foliage of plants such as cabbage; and, of first importance, it is possible to cover a given area in less than one-fifth the time required for applying the liquid spray. The cost of dust materials is somewhat higher than the liquid spray necessary for the same area. This expense is more than offset, however, in the decreased cost of labor and time necessary in application of dust and in the less expensive spraying equipment required.—From 17th Biennial Report of the Board of Horticulture, State of Oregon, 1923.

### HAVE YOU A COPY OF "BETTER BULBS—BY FARR"?

This year our bulb catalogue "Better Bulbs—By Farr" was issued only to those who asked for a copy or to those who previously purchased Farr's Quality Bulbs.

If you have not received a copy and are considering the purchase of Holland bulbs, you should write to us promptly.

Farr Collections of Holland Bulbs afford an opportunity to buy first-grade bulbs at second-grade prices.

**Note the Sunrise Collection No. 2 of Bulbs on page 8. Isn't it a good buy?**



This month and next is the time to pot bulbs for winter blooms in the house. It's easy to have a window like this. We furnish cultural instructions with the bulbs. You will find that Tulips, Hyacinths and Narcissi in many varieties, can be grown as easily as the common geranium or fuchsia, and will give the house a spring-like atmosphere.





California Privet makes a superb hedge in mild climates. Its beauty, low cost, freedom from disease, and compact growth are four points in its favor.

Forty years ago, no American home of distinction was complete without a wrought-iron fence of ornate design to keep the cast-iron animals from straying off the neatly terraced lawn. The wooden palings of colonial days were considered rather crude. In this day, however, such staunch outer bulwarks are not considered an asset to the front elevation of the small home grounds. Within the past decade most up-to-date communities have made their building ordinances very stringent on this point. The following extract from the rules governing a nearby development is typical: "No fences of any kind, other than hedges, low shrubbery, or similar decorative markings, shall be permitted."

A brief description of the different types of hedge should interest the home-owner.

**California Privet** is, perhaps, as well known as any hedge stock. Low cost and rapid growth are its advantages and necessity of frequent shearing its drawback. The close glossy foliage is evergreen as far north as Baltimore; north of New York City it will die back to the ground in severe winters. It costs but 14 or 21 cents per linear foot for 18- to 24-inch stock in single- or double-row planting respectively.

**Japanese Barberry** is a favorite for low hedges. Its dense growth and abundant red fruits make a fine winter appearance. It may be kept in formal outline by two or three shearings per season, but is more attractive and just as useful when allowed to assume its natural arching growth. Single-row planting is best and costs 30 cents a foot for 18- to 24-inch stock, or 45 cents per linear foot for larger stock.

**American Arborvitæ**, used as a hedge, gives a permanent and nearly impenetrable barrier of any height from 2 to 30 feet, dwarf varieties being used for the lower sizes. A single shearing each year will maintain the desired height and form indefinitely. A 2-foot hedge, capable of an ultimate height of 4 feet, costs 50 cents per linear foot. Since higher growth necessitates wider spacing, arborvitæ hedge, whatever its requirements, need

never cost over \$1 a foot unless immediate effect as a high screen is desired.

**Norway Spruce**, given time in its development into a hedge, makes a beautiful, dark green barrier. Sizes and prices are the same as for arborvitæ.

**Canadian Hemlock**, if cared for after heavy snowfall, by shaking off the snow, makes a splendid informal hedge.

**English Yew and Box**, given many years of growth, make the finest possible hedges. It is hard to fix a definite rate of cost of such hedges since the requirements are so varied.

The varieties here mentioned are those commonly used for hedges. However, almost any close-growing, deciduous or evergreen plant having many small branches and profuse foliage may be trained, with more or less pains, into hedge form. This article has dealt with hedges used for screen or barrier; flowering hedges of altheas, spiræas, lilacs, roses, etc., are just as useful in a somewhat different field.

Summing up the advantages of "living fences," we can credit them with: (1)

Vastly better appearance; (2) lower first cost—if you are doubtful, get estimates on a cheap wooden fence; and (3) lower cost and trouble of maintenance (pruning against paint, in brief). The first one alone should tip the balance, and the others trebly assure the home-owner of the value of hedges.—FRANCIS W. HUSSEY, *Land-scape Department*.

#### SHRUBS SUITABLE FOR HEDGES

For descriptions, see our General List of Shrubs in "Better Plants—by Farr."

|                    |         |         |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Altheas, assorted. | 2 to 10 | 100     |
| 3 ft.              | \$4 00  | \$30 00 |
| 3 to 4 ft.         | 4 50    | 35 00   |

#### **Berberis Thunbergii**

(Japanese Barberry).

|              |      |       |
|--------------|------|-------|
| 12 to 18 in. | 4 00 | 35 00 |
| 18 to 24 in. | 5 50 | 45 00 |
| 2 to 3 ft.   | 7 00 | 60 00 |

#### **Cydonia japonica** (Japanese Quince).

|              |      |       |
|--------------|------|-------|
| 18 to 24 in. | 4 50 | 35 00 |
|--------------|------|-------|

#### **Deutzia crenata magnifica**.

|              |       |        |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| 18 to 24 in. | 7 50  | 60 00  |
| 5 to 6 ft.   | 15 00 | 120 00 |

#### **Ligustrum ovalifolium**

(California Privet). 12

|              |    |      |
|--------------|----|------|
| to 18 in.    | 60 | 5 50 |
| 18 to 24 in. | 80 | 7 00 |

**Lilacs.** Write for quotations.

**Rhamnus cathartica** . . . 4 50 30 00

**R. Frangula** . . . . . 4 50 30 00

#### **Spiræa Vanhouttei**.

|            |      |       |
|------------|------|-------|
| 3 to 4 ft. | 6 00 | 50 00 |
| 4 to 5 ft. | 7 50 | 65 00 |

#### CUTTING FLOWERS

If possible flowers should be cut early in the morning, and at once placed in water. When cut in the late afternoon, put the flowers in a cool cellar, with stems in water, for several hours. Use a sharp knife, rather than scissors which may crush the stems. The water on roses need not be changed—simply fill the bowl as evaporation occurs.



*Spiræa Vanhouttei* hedges look like huge snowdrifts



### PHILADELPHUS VIRGINAL

Any shrub or plant that is granted a first-class certificate by the Royal Horticultural Society of England is worthy of more than passing mention. And when such shrub belongs to the old Mock Orange family, we certainly ought to stop and look, even though we may not listen.

Not so very long ago, I was talking with a New England gentleman about some of the varieties that have come into the trade during the past six or eight years. Of course, *Philadelphus Virginal* was mentioned, and this gentleman said, "I believe I have seen all the shrubs and plants that have been introduced during the past twenty-five years; my opinion is that *Philadelphus Virginal* is the most beautiful white-flowering shrub that has been introduced in a quarter of a century."

I am strongly inclined to agree with the New England gentleman, and without detriment in any way to the other varieties, I would say that *Philadelphus Virginal* really is the most beautiful and desirable of the Mock Oranges or of any other white-flowering shrub. The blooms are unusually large, with rounded petals and occasionally double crested; they come in clusters of 5 to 7 and you would not think of cutting a single bloom, but rather would take the whole cluster.

Under date of July 21, 1923, one of my customers wrote me as follows about *Philadelphus Virginal* and other shrubs:

Year before last I bought a quantity of shrubs from you which were very satisfactory. Most of them grew well and of those that died I am satisfied that the method of shipment (freight) accounted for some and the others did not show greater mortality than in the nursery row.

The remarks in a recent issue of *BETTER PLANTS* concerning *Philadelphus Virginal* are not strong enough. In full bloom this is one of the most beautiful shrubs and should be at least as popular as *forsythia*.—I. J. ACKERMAN, Paterson, N. J.

We have been propagating this variety, and at the present time have a limited number of plants that can be shipped this fall or early next spring. I have priced them at \$2 each, and I am sure that is extremely reasonable for plants of a size that I am planning to send out.

### FARR'S FOUR NEW IRISES

During the past three or four months I have been talking almost continuously about my quartette of new Irises—*Cecil Minturn*, *Sea Gull*, *Seminole*, and *Japanesque*.

Not only have I talked about them, but my friends have talked about them too, and at the various Iris shows where they have been exhibited the quartette has been the center of attraction. At first I feared that I might be over-enthusiastic, but after hearing all of the things that have been said about these four varieties and noting the remarks made by experts and amateurs, I am constrained to believe that my own statements have been modest indeed.

The August issue of *BETTER PLANTS* showed these "Masterpieces of the Garden" in color on page 1. While this illustration was very good indeed, it does not by any means do justice to the natural beauty of *Sea Gull* and *Japanesque*. This year the two varieties bloomed quite late



Of all the flowering shrubs *Philadelphus Virginal* comes close to holding first place. This picture conveys only a suggestion of the lovely flowers

in the season, which delayed the production of the colored illustration for the August number. *BETTER PLANTS* had to be printed and mailed at a certain time, so we thought it best to use an illustration that is "near good" rather than delay the publication three to four weeks until accurate colors could be prepared.

I am planning to use the new illustration of the "Masterpieces of the Garden" in the next edition of *Farr's Hardy Plant Specialties*, which I am hoping to have ready in the early part of 1924. In the meantime please remember that the following descriptions of *Sea Gull* and *Japanesque* are as nearly correct as the English language will permit—at least so far as the color combinations are concerned. To describe these four masterpieces would tax the ability of the most skillful word-painter, so we must be content with giving only an outline of the chief points. When you have these Masterpieces in your own garden you will see them in their glory. Each year they will increase in value because of the natural multiplication of the plants.

#### Four Masterpieces Described

*Cecil Minturn*. Standards and falls a uniform shade of cattleya-rose; light beard. A large dome-shaped flower and a distinct improvement in the pink Irises. Height 2 feet. \$5.00 each.

*Sea Gull*. Standards white, dome-shaped; falls white faintly shaded blue and netted with narrow blue lines or veins. A large and unusual flower which is appropriately named. Height 2 feet. \$3.00 each.

*Seminole*. One of the richest colored varieties. Standards soft violet-rose; falls rich velvety crimson; brilliant orange beard. Blooms exceptionally large, dome-shaped; equally effective variety for specimen or mass planting because of its free-

blooming character; medium height and strong grower. Honorable mention by the American Iris Society, June, 1920, and rates 8.3. \$2.50 each.

*Japanesque*. A distinct departure from the German type. Six petals spread horizontally in the form of a Japanese Iris, giving the flower the effect of having six falls without standards. The standards are lavender-white flecked lilac; falls deep violet edged with pale lavender; coppery yellow beard. In many blooms the standards are marked like the falls. \$3.00 each.

#### MASTERPIECE COLLECTION

| IRIS                           | Each   |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Cecil Minturn</i> . . . . . | \$5.00 |
| <i>Sea Gull</i> . . . . .      | 3.00   |
| <i>Seminole</i> . . . . .      | 2.50   |
| <i>Japanesque</i> . . . . .    | 3.00   |

Complete set (amounting to \$13.50)  
for \$12.00

#### BUYING ON A PRICE BASIS

I believe that today the majority of people are buying on a quality basis rather than on a price basis. The wisdom of such buying is proved by the admitted and popular fact that quality is remembered long after price is forgotten.

A wide variation in prices exists in different nursery catalogues. The natural impulse is to order from the lowest-priced house. Because the low-priced plant cannot be seen and handled in comparison with the higher-priced article there remains only printer's ink or the firm's reputation to prevent the buyer from saving the dollar first cost but losing out in following years.

A 35 cent perennial can be developed into a \$35 border in a few years.

A \$10 iris or peony can be multiplied into a score of plants in the same time.

(Continued on page 7)



## FAMOUS BOTANISTS

That its readers may be familiar with the lives of the men whose work forms the foundation of the science of botany and of every related art and industry, *Better Plants* will publish in succeeding issues a series of short sketches of the lives of famous botanists.

The first man to treat botany as a science, and the first to publish a work on botany, was Pliny the Elder, the famous Roman naturalist. Born at Comum in 23 A. D., the early part of his life was occupied by the haphazard combination of sport, classical study, and military service common among Roman youth.

It was probably at about the age of thirty-five that Pliny settled down to the work of writing the thirty-seven volumes of his "Natural History." Books XII to XXVII inclusive deal with plants. About half the subject matter is so tinged with superstition as to be worthless to any save a student of abnormal psychology, but the majority of the work was a sincere and thorough description of a vast number of varieties of trees and lesser plants. His classification of the characteristics of stem, leaf, and flower is the basis of the present-day system. He describes the uses of the timber from the various trees in a most practical manner. His advice on growth and culture of useful crops is sound and sensible. He drew heavily on knowledge of other men and other peoples, but gave credit where it was due.

The "Natural History" was published in 77 A. D. and humbly dedicated to the Emperor Titus. Two years later Pliny was killed in the eruption of Vesuvius which buried Pompeii. He was in command of the fleet sent to the aid of the stricken city. Eager to observe the natural phenomena of the outburst at close range, he ventured far up the mountain side. Shortness of breath made him unconscious and he died before his harder companions could get him back to the ship.

"It is the earth," wrote Pliny some 2,000 years ago, "that, like a kind mother, receives us at our birth and sustains us when born. It is this alone, of all the elements around us, that is never found an enemy to man. The body of waters deluges him with rains, oppresses him with hail, and drowns him with inundations; the air rushes in storms, prepares the tempest or lights up the volcano; but the earth, gentle and indulgent, ever subservient to the wants of man, spreads his walks with flowers and his table with plenty; returns with interest every good committed to her care; and though she produces the poison she still supplies the antidote; though constantly teased more to furnish the luxuries of man than his necessities, yet even at the last she continues her kind indulgence, and when life is over she piously hides his remains in her bosom." FRANCIS W. HUSSEY,

Landscape Department

Everybody wants

## Good Peonies

We have good Peonies for everybody. September and October are planting months.

### REPLACEMENT AND ADJUSTMENT

Of course, you prefer to deal with a firm which "stands back of" its product, and we want you to regard us as such a firm. We always prefer to have our customers tell us if the plants we furnish are disappointing so that the trouble can be remedied and adjusted.

However, plants are an unusual product to "stand back of" for after they leave our hands their future success and welfare depends entirely upon their environment and treatment. These we cannot control or be responsible for, and unless plants are reported to be received in a poor condition, there is, theoretically, no fault on our part for their failure.

All too frequently we find that our plants have failed in the hands of the customer simply because their care and attention were neglected. For us to give adjustments and replacements in such cases is unfair to our other customers. After all, our income must exceed our expenses, and the cost of free replacements would have to be included in our selling prices and be ultimately paid by you and our other customers.

We feel that folks who have neglected their plants should be told so; should resolve to do better next time and should take their loss philosophically.

Here are some Reasons why Plants fail.

1. *Lack of watering:* During the first season watering is absolutely necessary. It can hardly be overdone.

2. *Lack of cultivation:* It is necessary to keep the ground well stirred for two reasons: first to eliminate and prevent weeds; second, so that what moisture is supplied can soak and reach the roots and will not be immediately evaporated by the sun.

3. *Overdosing the soil with fertilizers:* Of course the plants need nourishment, but not in the form of manure in direct contact with the roots.

4. *Planting in raw lean soil:* Such soil should be mixed with humus and bone-meal, obtainable at any seed or hardware store. If soil is heavy clay, mix with sand. If too sandy, mix with humus.

5. *Fake and quack planting methods:* We have heard of folks who bury iron and bricks with the roots so that they will be sure to grow. We know of folks who have placed plants into the ground without removing packing materials, such as moss and excelsior.

6. *Insects:* Many plants fail because of insect pests and the owner through indifference is never the wiser. A weekly examination and a letter to our office will take care of this trouble.

7. *Smoke and gas:* Many plants are not adapted to smoky locations. If you are in doubt, ask before you buy.

8. *Miscellaneous:* Plants fail because of drains, dogs, pests, children, heat, cold, accidents, wrong locations and numerous other causes besides those already mentioned in this article.

Yet, some folks blame the nursery when a plant fails from six months to three years after they have bought it. Fortunately, most folks accept the responsibility of a live addition to the family and treat plants accordingly.

**OUR GUARANTEE:** We guarantee truthness to name, safe arrival, and assume all the risks of digging and transportation. Unless a customer reports within five days after receipt of plants it is understood that they arrived in a live and healthy condition. Is it our fault if later the plants fail? It is not, and in fairness to our customers and ourselves our guarantee goes no further.

H. G. SEYLER,  
Treasurer

### THE OLD GARDENER

She has sown gardens all her years,

And gathered of them scantily

Enough for her spare table's grace,

Unbeautiful and commonplace,

And seen what no one else could see.

Year after year she says, "No more

It is for me to dig and sow;

My arm is weak, my back is bent,

My strength has long been overspent,

And I must let my garden go."

But as the springs come, year by year,

With the old call, and thrill, and stir,

The holy mysteries of earth,

Of light, and life, and joy, and birth,

Go trembling through the heart of her;

And with her apronful of seeds,

Dropped howsoever sparingly,

She glorifies her little space,

So humble and so commonplace,

And sees what no one else can see.

KATHARINE ATHERTON GRIMES

### BUYING ON A PRICE BASIS

(Continued from page 6)

A \$5 shrub, tree, or evergreen soon grows into \$50.

The first cost is a ridiculously small proportion of the ultimate value.

Is there anything apart from plants which can so quickly increase in value?

Do not most of our purchases, outside of plants, depreciate instead of appreciate?

Then why skimp and save on the purchase of a plant and nine times out of ten receive a "runt"?

We know of 15,000 hardy plant buyers who repeatedly buy Farr's Hardy Plant Specialties and Better Plants because they, too, at one time have bought "runts," "razorbacks" and "mongrels."

We know there are 250,000 buyers who patronize only first-class, nationally advertised nurseries and receive value for value given.

I am not apologizing for high prices. Our prices are not high—they are fair. At our prices we can furnish you with superior plants and remain in business to grow more of them.

H. G. SEYLER, Treasurer

### DOES YOUR SOIL LACK HUMUS?

A compost heap or a compost box makes a good humus factory, and every gardener should have one. The compost heap takes care of leaves raked up, lawn clippings, and all green refuse. The decayed vegetation makes a wonderful mulch in the spring. Every bit of plant-food conserved and placed where plants can utilize it means a better crop return.









Now—this Fall—plan for a display like this next spring

### Farr's Irises Lovely as Orchids

When you know Irises as "June companions" they reveal their delicate, ethereal loveliness, and lead you into a wonderland of delight. Wouldn't you like to adopt them as a "hobby," just as I did many years ago?

My Wyomissing Seedlings have become so famous with Iris experts that my friends say I ought to talk more about them. But I would rather have *you see them*, so I have made this special group of

### Second Rainbow Collection \$5

Experts who have seen these seedlings are enthusiastic in praise. Some varieties have taken prizes and all are exceedingly popular. Order this collection now and pay after the plants are received.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Blue Jay, light and dark blue . . .                  | Each \$1 35 |
| Chester Hunt, light and dark blue . . .              | 50          |
| Glory of Reading, blue and purple . . .              | 75          |
| Hiawatha, lavender and royal purple . . .            | 75          |
| Juniata, clear blue; tall . . . . .                  | 50          |
| Mary Garden, pale yellow and white . . . . .         | 50          |
| Mt. Penn, lavender-rose and crimson-maroon . . . . . | 1 00        |
| Navajo, yellow and maroon . . . . .                  | 1 00        |
| Nokomis, light lavender and violet . . .             | 35          |
| Pauline, pale violet . . . . .                       | 50          |
| Paxatawny, violet and yellow . . . . .               | 75          |
| Quaker Lady, lavender, blue and gold . . .           | 75          |

\$7 70

### One Plant of Each Variety for \$5

Order now and pay after you receive the plants.

### When Mistress Spring Comes to Your Garden

Her path should be lined with daffodils and tulips, those colorful blooms of May and June. For the gardener who wants an extra-choice assortment of spring flowers, I recommend

### The Sunrise Collection No. 2

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| 25 Narcissi, assorted varieties . . .  | \$2 75 |
| 75 Single Early Tulips, assorted . . . | 2 50   |
| 75 Darwin Tulips, assorted . . . . .   | 2 50   |
| 75 Breeder Tulips, assorted . . . . .  | 2 50   |
| 25 Hyacinths, assorted . . . . .       | 3 50   |

\$13 75

Any one collection at the price indicated. No discount applicable.

**Complete Sunrise Collection No. 2, 275 bulbs, for only \$12.**

Send your order now—you need not pay until you receive the bulbs.

### NIAGARA HAND-DUST GUN

The Niagara Hand-Dust Gun is a "machine gun" for plant enemies. Three to six times as fast as spraying. More economical in use and result.



For all garden vines, shrubbery and perennials. Price \$4, including 1 pound of All-In-One Dust and a copy of "Instructions for Exterminating Garden Pests," a 40 page book.

All-In-One Dust is effective for scales, sucking insects, mildew, blight and chewing insects.

Sounds like a "cure all" but money back if unsatisfactory at any time.

**Bertrand H. Farr—Wyomissing Nurseries Company**  
1250 Garfield Avenue, Wyomissing, Penna.



## A Famous Originator Said to an Iris Society President:

"If a planting of all the good Irises in existence were made, and each originator's product planted in separate groups, the Farr seedlings would stand out most prominently of them all. They have a wider range of color and a better quality of bloom." (Names furnished on request.)

*Spring, 1923.*

Return Postage Guaranteed by  
Farr Nurseries Co., Wyomissing, Pa.

**1c. PAID**

Wyomissing, Penna.

Permit No. 1

L C Corbett  
Bureau of Plant Industry  
U S Dept of Agriculture  
Washington D C

**BETTER PLANTS—SEPTEMBER, 1923**  
**A Magazine Devoted to the Hardy Garden**